

1. Applicants request reconsideration of this requirement.

Whether to require restriction in any application is discretionary with the United States Patent and Trademark Office ("USPTO"). Here, the subject matter of each identified species is closely related to that of the other. Under the circumstances, it would be beneficial to examine all the claims in the present application.

It is therefore requested that the species election be reconsidered and withdrawn and, further, that all the claims in the application be examined together.

2. Nevertheless, in compliance with the requirement stated by the examiner, applicants hereby elect the claims of species I for examination on the merits. This election is made without prejudice to applicants' right to file a divisional application directed to the non-elected species.

As specified by the examiner, the claims readable on the elected species are 1 – 13 and 52 – 60.

3. Even though it does not appear to have any substantive effect on further prosecution in the application, applicants' undersigned attorney would like to point out that although the requirement has been styled as a species election, it nevertheless has the attributes of a standard restriction requirement under present USPTO restriction practice. An example of this is that the examiner has singled out the claims which are directed to each of the species identified. Applicants' attorney attempted to contact the examiner to discuss this consideration but was not successful.

Respectfully submitted,



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